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ABSTRACT

A five-year follow-up study is being conducted of 10,015 students who transferred from Illinois two-year colleges to 42 senior institutions in the state in fall 1979. An analysis of the persistence and achievement rates of the transfer students during their second year after transfer (1980-81) revealed: (1) 71% of the Associate in Arts (AA)/Associate in Science (AS) degree recipients, 56% of the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree recipients, and 57% of the students who transferred without a degree completed the spring 1981 term or earned their baccalaureate prior to it; (2) 31% of the AA/AS degree holders, 19% of the AAS degree recipients, and 11% of those without an associate degree earned their baccalaureate by the end of the second year after transfer; (3) the collective grade point average (GPA) for spring 1981 was 3.01 for AA/AS recipients, 2.99 for AAS degree holders, and 2.82 for non-associate degree holders; (4) while GPA's for all three groups were higher at the two-year institution than at the senior institution, GPA's rose each quarter at the transfer institution; (5) of the students who earned their baccalaureate degrees within two years after transfer, 26% obtained degrees in business, 17% in social and behavioral sciences, and 13% in education; and (6) approximately 8% of the transfer students changed majors from one broad program category to another. (HB)

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FALL 1979 TRANSFER STUDY

REPORT 3:

SECOND YEAR PERSISTENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

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FALL 1979 TRANSFER STUDY
Report 3
SECOND YEAR PERSISTENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT

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PREFACE

The purpose of this third report on the Illinois Fall 1979 Transfer Study is to describe and analyze second year persistence and achievement statewide.

The Fall 1979 Transfer Study is following, for five years after transfer, 10,015 students who transferred from Illinois two-year colleges to 42 Illinois senior colleges and universities in Fall Term 1979. Report 1, issued in February 1982, described the mobility patterns and pre-transfer characteristics of the Fall 1979 transfer students. Report 2, issued in August 1982, described the Fall 1979 transfer students' persistence and achievement during the first year after transfer, academic year 1979-80. This third report will examine data for academic year 1980-81.

The staff of the Illinois Community College Board and the members of the Transfer Study Subcommittee appreciate the continuing cooperation of participating institutions. Suggestions for improvement of all aspects of the study and reports are welcome.

Ann Kieffer Bragg
Associate Director for Research

HIGHLIGHTS

This Third Report of the 1979 Transfer Study analyzes the persistence and achievement the second year after transfer--academic year 1980-81--of the 10,015 students who transferred from Illinois two-year colleges to Illinois senior institutions in the Fall of 1979. The trends observed during the first year after transfer continue in the second year. Post-transfer persistence and achievement continue to vary according to the students' pre-transfer degree status. Specifically, the report finds that for:

Associate in Arts/Associate in Science Degree Recipients,

-- 71 percent completed the Spring 1981 term (or earned their baccalaureate degrees prior to it);

-- 31 percent earned their baccalaureate degrees by the end of the second year from the senior institutions to which they transferred in the Fall of 1979; and

-- collectively they earned a Spring 1981 term mean GPA of 3.03 ("B").

Associate in Applied Science Degree Recipients,

-- 56 percent completed the Spring 1981 term (or earned their baccalaureate degrees prior to it);

-- 19 percent earned their baccalaureate degrees by the end of the second year from the senior institution to which they transferred in the Fall of 1979; and

-- collectively they earned a Spring 1981 term mean GPA of 2.99 ("B").

Transfer students who had not earned an associate degree,

-- 57 percent completed the Spring 1981 term (or earned their baccalaureate degrees prior to it);

-- 11 percent earned their baccalaureate degrees by the end of the second year from the senior institution to which they transferred in the Fall of 1979; and

-- collectively they earned a Spring 1981 term mean GPA of 2.82 ("B-").

INTRODUCTION

The Fall 1979 Transfer Study Report 2: First Year Persistence and Achievement found that both persistence and achievement the first year after transfer varied by the students' pre-transfer degree status. Students who transferred after receiving their Associate in Arts (AA) or Associate in Science (AS) degrees, as a group, persisted and achieved at a higher level than did either Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree recipients or non-degreed transfer students.

This report will examine the post-transfer success of students in each of these three pre-transfer degree categories for the second year after transfer, academic year 1980-81. Data will be presented in two sections: Persistence and baccalaureate degree completion rates first and, then, achievement as measured by earned grade point average (GPA).

PERSISTENCE AND BACCALAUREATE COMPLETION RATES

The variation in persistence rates among students in the three pre-transfer degree categories during the first year after transfer continues in the second year. As Table 1 on the next page indicates, AA/AS degree recipients persist, as a group, at a higher rate than either non-degreed transfers or AAS degree recipients. Seventy-one percent of the AA/AS degree transfer students completed the Spring Term 1981 or had earned their baccalaureate degrees prior to it, while only 56 percent of the AAS degree recipients and 57 percent of the non-degreed transfer students did so.

The overall persistence rate of 62 percent (including previous graduates) at the end of spring term is comparable to the findings of the Fall 1973 study which reported a second-year persistence rate of 78 percent for those students whose status was known. (The status was not known for 41 percent of the original sample.)

The number of students earning baccalaureate degrees from the institution to which they originally transferred by the end of the second year after transfer also varies by pre-transfer degree status. AA/AS degree transfer students had the highest baccalaureate degree completion rate of the three groups by the end of the second year, at 31 percent. A greater proportion of AAS degree recipients than non-degreed transfers also completed baccalaureate degrees, reflecting the higher average number of credits accepted in transfer by the senior institutions -- 56 credits for AAS degree transfers versus 43 credits for non-degreed transfers (see Pages 6-7 of Report 2). The overall completion rate of 18 percent at the end of two years is comparable to the Fall 1973 two-year baccalaureate degree completion rate of 22 percent of those students whose status was known, or 13 percent of the original sample.

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Table 1

POST-TRANSFER PERSISTENCE AND BACCALAUREATE DEGREE COMPLETION BY PRE-TRANSFER DEGREE CATEGORY

Pre-transfer Degree Category		Entered Fall 1979	Completed Fall 1979	Graduated Fall 1979 or Winter 1980	Completed Spring 1980	Graduated Spring 1980 or Summer 1980	Completed Fall 1980*	Graduated Fall 1980 or Winter 1981	Completed Spring 1981*	Graduated Spring 1981	Total Graduated Through Spring 1981
AA/AS Degree	(N)	3,149**	2,951	1	2,612	19	2,340	87	2,136	861	968
	(%)		(94%)	***	(83%)	***	(74%)	(3%)	(68%)	(27%)	(31%)
AAS Degree	(N)	722	661	0	527	4	438	18	392	118	140
	(%)		(92%)	-	(73%)	***	(61%)	(2%)	(54%)	(16%)	(19%)
No Degree	(N)	6,144	5,671	2	4,739	25	3,928	70	3,447	587	684
	(%)		(92%)	***	(77%)	***	(64%)	(1%)	(56%)	(10%)	(11%)
Total	(N)	10,015	9,283	3	7,878	48	6,706	175	5,975	1,566	1,792
	(%)		(93%)	***	(79%)	***	(67%)	(2%)	(60%)	(16%)	(18%)

*Based on credits earned in the term. The numbers earning a term GPA were slightly lower: 2,324, 435, and 3,900, respectively, for Fall 1980, and 2095, 389, and 3,426, respectively, for Spring 1981.

**One AA/AS degree recipient was found to have graduated at the end of Summer 1979 and, thus, should not have been considered a Fall 1979 transfer student.

***Less than one percent.

Table 2 on the next three pages shows the sex, age, and program of baccalaureate degree graduates for each of the three pre-transfer degree categories. Eighty-one percent of the AA/AS recipients, 76 percent of the AAS recipients, and 67 percent of the non-degreed transfer students who earned baccalaureate degrees within two years after transfer were less than 26 years old. Conversely, 16 percent, 21 percent, and 27 percent of each group, respectively, were older than the traditional college-age population at the time of baccalaureate degree completion. (The remainder declined to indicate their ages.) Half of the baccalaureate degree completers were men and half were women, the same proportion as in the original sample.

The largest percentage of AA/AS degree recipients and non-degreed transfer students earned their baccalaureate degrees in business fields, with the social and behavioral sciences category second. Of the AAS degree recipients, the largest percentage completed baccalaureate degrees in the social and behavioral sciences, with the health fields second. Overall, 26 percent of the 1979 transfer students who earned their baccalaureate degrees within two years after transfer completed in business, 17 percent in social and behavioral sciences, and 13 percent each in education and in such "other" professional fields as agriculture, architecture, and journalism.

Table 3 shows changes in program of enrollment between Fall 1979 and Fall 1980 for students in each of the three pre-transfer degree categories. For the most part, those students who were already in or became "undeclared/unknown" in Fall 1980 are those no longer in attendance. Except for these probable withdrawals, only eight percent of the transfers overall changed major from one broad program category to another. Students who had completed associate degrees prior to transferring were slightly less likely to change programs than non-degreed transfers, perhaps due to their greater number of pre-transfer credits earned and accepted by the senior institutions.

In summary, AA/AS degree recipients, as a group, have a higher persistence rate and a higher baccalaureate degree completion rate at the end of the second year after transfer than have AAS degree recipients and the non-degreed transfer students. Overall persistence and baccalaureate degree completion rates at the end of the second year after transfer are comparable to the Fall 1973 transfer student study findings.

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Table 2
(1 of 3)

SEX, AGE, AND PROGRAM OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREE COMPLETERS BY PRE-TRANSFER DEGREE CATEGORY

AA/AS Degree Recipients

Program (HEGIS)	Before Fall 1980				During FY 1981						Spring 1981						Total in Each Program by End of Spring 1981	
	< 26		26+		Unknown		< 26		26+		Unknown		< 26		26+			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	Number	Percent
Undeclared/Unknown/Invalid			2	7				1		1	1	2	2	11	3	2	32	3
Business (05)							10	9	2	4	4	3	150	106	18	5	311	32
Education (08)							1	10	1	6	1	4	15	82	3	16	139	14
Engineering (09)							1		2		1	1	34	2	10	1	52	5
Arts/Humanities (10, 11, 15, 23)							3			1		2	16	30	2	3	57	6
Social/Behavioral Sciences (14, 20, 21, 22)							4	5	1	5	2	3	50	54	13	17	158	16
Science and Math (04, 07, 17, 19)							3	1				1	33	24	3	2	67	7
Health (12)										1			4	9		6	20	2
General Liberal Arts (49)			1	1			1	1	2	2				2	1	1	12	1
Other HEGIS						1	2		2		1	2	58	37	6	2	111	12
TOTAL			3	8		1	25	31	10	20	10	18	362	357	59	55	959	98

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Table 2
(2 of 3)

SEX, AGE, AND PROGRAM OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREE COMPLETERS BY PRE-TRANSFER DEGREE CATEGORY

AAS Degree Recipients

Program (HEGIS)	Before Fall 1980				During FY 1981				Spring 1981						Total in Each Program by End of Spring 1981	
	< 26		26+		< 26		26+		Unknown		< 26		26+			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	Number	Percent
Undeclared/Unknown/Invalid		1	1								1	2	2		7	5
Business (05)						1		1			4	6		2	14	10
Education (08)									1		3	4			8	6
Engineering (09)							1				7		2		10	7
Arts/Humanities (10, 11, 15, 23)												2			2	1
Social/Behavioral Sciences (14, 20, 21, 22)					2	4		2			13	15		4	40	29
Science and Math (04, 07, 17, 19)											2	2	1	1	6	4
Health (12)		1	1			2		3				8		5	20	14
General Liberal Arts (49)								1			4			1	6	4
Technologies (50-55)											3				3	2
Other HEGIS					1				1		18	3	1		24	17
TOTAL		2	2		3	7	1	7	2		55	42	6	13	140	99

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Table 2
(3 of 3)

SEX, AGE, AND PROGRAM OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREE COMPLETERS BY PRE-TRANSFER DEGREE CATEGORY

No Pre-transfer Degree

Program (HEGIS)	Before Fall 1980						During FY 1981						Spring 1981						Total in Program by End of Spring 1981	
	Unknown		< 26		26+		Unknown		< 26		26+		Unknown		< 26		26+			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	Number	Percent
Undeclared/Unknown/Invalid		4	5	3	5	3						1			6	11	10	5	53	8
Business (05)									4	1	2	5	3	2	78	30	7	5	137	20
Education (08)							1			3				4	7	50	4	13	82	12
Engineering (09)									1	1					31	2	13		48	7
Arts/Humanities (10, 11, 15, 23)									1	1	1	4	1		6	8		4	26	4
Social/Behavioral Sciences (14, 20, 21, 22)				1			3			3	3	4	3	4	27	33	9	13	103	15
Science and Math (04, 07, 17, 19)									2	1	2	1	1	1	26	15	14	2	65	10
Health (12)		1			1	1	3			4		10	1	1	3	10	1	17	53	8
General Liberal Arts (49)					2		1				1	2	1	4		3	5	2	21	3
Technologies (50-55)															5				5	1
Other HEGIS									2		2		2	3	44	30	2	5	90	13
TOTAL		5	5	4	8	4	8	10	14	11	27		12	19	233	192	65	66	683	101

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Table 3

CHANGES IN PROGRAM OF ENROLLMENT: FALL 1979 TO FALL 1980

Fall 1979 Program		Fall 1980 Program: AA/AS Degree — Stayed the Same	AA/AS Degree — Became Undeclared or Unknown	AA/AS Degree — Moved to Another Program	AAS Degree — Stayed the Same	AAS Degree — Became Undeclared or Unknown	AAS Degree — Moved to Another Program	No Degree — Stayed the Same	No Degree — Became Undeclared or Unknown	No Degree — Moved to Another Program
Undeclared/Unknown/Invalid		250	(250)	53	86	(86)	20	869	(869)	176
Business (05)		687	100	25	97	26	3	917	240	71
Education (08)		377	58	16	47	14	2	469	125	42
General Liberal Arts (49)		51	20	12	26	19	4	178	94	87
Science & Mathematics (04, 07, 17, 19)		186	47	36	36	15	5	351	129	70
Social & Behavioral Sciences (14, 20, 21, 22)		337	74	22	87	28	3	477	191	40
Engineering (09)		140	27	5	43	5	3	259	75	19
Arts & Humanities (10, 11, 15, 23)		194	31	15	8	4	1	249	80	31
Health (12)		91	30	8	44	23	3	269	94	12
Technologies (50-55)		6	4	4	8	0	1	53	30	10
Other HEGIS		206	30	8	49	9	3	338	75	24
TOTAL	N	2525 (2275)	421 (671)	204	531 (445)	143 (229)	48	4429 (3560)	1133 (2002)	582
	%	80% (72%)	13% (21%)	6%	74% (62%)	20% (32%)	7%	72% (58%)	18% (33%)	9%

ACHIEVEMENT

The trends in achievement as measured by earned GPA during the first year after transfer also continue through the second year. As indicated in Table 4 below, after the first-term drop in GPA, the mean GPA for each of the three groups continues to increase throughout the two years after transfer until the Spring 1981 Term GPA is nearly the same as the pre-transfer GPA. As with the persistence measures, AA/AS degree recipients earned higher GPA's after transfer than did AAS degree recipients and non-degreed transfer students.

Table 4

MEAN GPA EACH TERM BY PRE-TRANSFER DEGREE STATUS

Pre-transfer Degree Status	Pre-transfer Mean	Pre-transfer S.D.	Fall 1979 Mean	Fall 1979 S.D.	Spring 1980 Mean	Spring 1980 S.D.	Fall 1980 Mean	Fall 1980 S.D.	Spring 1981 Mean	Spring 1981 S.D.	Cumulative Spring 1981 Mean	Cumulative Spring 1981 S.D.
AA/AS Degree	3.04	0.53	2.71	0.80	2.86	0.75	2.92	0.74	3.03	0.70	2.85	0.66
AAS Degree	3.03	0.51	2.67	0.84	2.77	0.77	2.85	0.74	2.99	0.74	2.79	0.66
No Degree	2.87	0.62	2.54	0.86	2.64	0.82	2.70	0.78	2.82	0.77	2.64	0.71

Table 5 below shows post-transfer achievement in terms of the percentages of those students receiving grades within each group who earned at least a "C" average (2.00 GPA) and at least a "B" average (3.00 GPA) each term after transfer.

Table 5

PERCENTAGE OF GRADES RECEIVED EACH TERM AT "C" OR BETTER AND AT "B" OR BETTER BY PRE-TRANSFER DEGREE

Pre-transfer Degree Status	Fall 1979	Spring 1980	Fall 1980	Spring 1981
AA/AS Degree				
"C" or better	85%	90%	91%	94%
"B" or better	44%	52%	55%	61%
AAS Degree				
"C" or better	83%	87%	90%	94%
"B" or better	45%	50%	52%	56%
No Degree				
"C" or better	77%	82%	85%	88%
"B" or better	37%	40%	42%	50%

Since an increase in average achievement, whether it is measured by mean GPA or percentage earning a specific GPA, can be due simply to the withdrawal of low achievers, Table 6 below compares the GPA trend for three groups -- those who completed the Spring 1981 term, those who did not, and those who graduated at some point before the Spring 1981 term.

Table 6

COMPARISON OF MEAN GPA'S FOR SPRING 1981 COMPLETERS, NON-COMPLETERS, AND PRIOR GRADUATES

Spring 1981 Enrollment Status	Pre-transfer GPA	Fall 1979 GPA	Fall 1980 GPA	Spring 1981 GPA
Completers	3.00	2.73	2.84	2.91
Non-completers	2.82	2.34	2.31	---
Prior Graduates	3.24	3.13	3.26	---

Table 6 shows that those students who completed the second year after transfer, as a group, have a slightly higher pre-transfer GPA and a significantly higher GPA for each of the two fall terms than do the non-completers. The completers follow the previously observed pattern of initial decline and subsequent increase in GPA so that their Spring 1981 mean GPA nears their mean pre-transfer GPA. The non-completers do not show this same pattern. The difference in patterns suggests that completers overcome "transfer shock," while the non-completers do not.

The students who earned their baccalaureate degrees prior to the Spring term 1981 have the highest mean GPA throughout, greater than a "B" in all cases. Nevertheless, they too experience a first-term after transfer drop in mean GPA and subsequent increase, with the Fall 1980 mean GPA slightly exceeding their mean pre-transfer GPA.

In summary, AA/AS degree recipients, as a group, earn higher grades after transfer than do the AAS degree recipients and non-degreed transfer students, although each group follows the same pattern of initial decline and subsequent increase in mean GPA throughout the two years. Spring 1981 term completers earned higher grades, on the average, than did non-completers, and those students who earned their baccalaureate degrees prior to the Spring 1981 term earned the highest grades throughout. The comparison of mean GPA for completers and non-completers reveals that attrition alone is not responsible for the increase in mean GPA after the first post-transfer term. "Transfer shock" is an observable phenomenon.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The trends observed during the first year after transfer continue in the second year. Post-transfer persistence and achievement continue to vary according to the students' pre-transfer degree status.

AA/AS degree recipients, as a group, perform better after transfer than do AAS and non-degreed transfer students on all measures: retention at 71 percent, baccalaureate degree completion at 31 percent, and mean cumulative GPA at 2.85 at the end of Spring Term 1981, the end of the second year after transfer. For this group, however, in which the majority continued in the same program and, on the average, had more than 60 credits accepted in transfer by the senior institutions, a baccalaureate completion rate of less than one-third in two years is not an impressive number. Their average of 12 to 13 credits earned each semester, in which a normal load is 16 credits, suggests that a high proportion of students are attending less than full time. The high proportion of part-time attendance in turn suggests that most of the AA/AS degree recipients still enrolled in Spring 1981 should complete their baccalaureate degrees in 1981-82.

AAS degree recipients, as a group, have the second highest baccalaureate degree completion rate at 19 percent and the second highest cumulative GPA at 2.79 at the end of the second year. This group also, however, has the lowest two-year retention rate at 56 percent.

Non-degreed transfer students, as a group, have the lowest GPA throughout the post-transfer period and the lowest baccalaureate completion rate, at 11 percent, of the three groups. The lower baccalaureate completion rate, however, reflects the lower average number of pre-transfer credits earned and accepted by the senior institutions to which they transferred.

The reader is cautioned that this study compares post-transfer success of students in these three groups only. It does not compare their success to "native" students at the senior institutions to which they transferred. In addition, the study was designed to follow the students' success only at the institution to which they transferred in the Fall of 1979. Subsequent transfer to another institution has not been ascertained to date.

Despite these caveats, the Fall 1979 transfer students are performing at least as well as, and, in the case of the AA/AS degree recipients, much better than, the transfer students studied six years earlier. Both attrition rates and the observed "transfer shock" phenomenon, nevertheless, suggest that greater attention needs to be paid to the transfer process by two-year and senior institutions. Admissions criteria and articulation agreements need continuous examination as do advising, counseling and orientation processes to facilitate a smoother transition and to ameliorate the effects of "transfer shock" for two-year to senior institution transfer students.

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